ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE ___2-9___

NEW YORK TIMES
4 OCTOBER 1981

Harvard Drafts Rules on Conflicts of Interest

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Oct. 3 — Harvard University's faculty council has approved a broad set of guidelines regulating the activities of faculty members outside the academic community, especially those involved in profit-making business ventures.

The policy establishes for the first time a committee of senior faculty, headed by the dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, to oversee colleagues involved in activities that could conflict with their teaching and research responsibilities. The guidelines, which have been debated and revised for the last year, will be considered by the full faculty next month, but no major opposition is expected.

At Harvard and elsewhere, full-time faculty members have been encouraged to become involved in such outside activities as consulting for private industry and the Government in the hope that those experiences would enrich their contributions to the university. Most also use that opportunity to supplement their university salaries.

But in recent years such activities have come under increasing attack. Critics say professors affiliated with companies may become secretive about their work or may use discoveries made in academic laboratories for personal profit. After Harvard proposed and then dropped a plan to enter into a business partnership in genetic engineering with several of its own scientists last year, there were calls for more intensive examination of faculty commitments outside the university.

"I don't think there are more faculty involved in outside activities now than there were a few years ago," said Dean Paul C. Martin, a physics professor, one of the authors of the guidelines. "But we are more aware of the problems."

Under the guidelines approved by the faculty council last week, faculty members would be required to consult with the committee about any activities "that seemed to present an unacceptable conflict of interest or commitment." Listed as examples of such activities are any instance in which a faculty member assumes executive responsibilities for an outside organization, uses unpublished information derived from university research for outside projects or moves research that would ordinarily be conducted on the campus to another location.

However, university officials said privately that even when such conflicts existed, a major effort would be made to accommodate the faculty member. For example, Walter Gilbert, a Nobel Prize-winning biochemist who is one of the leading researchers in genetic engineering, has been granted a leave of absence this year so he can become chief executive officer of Biogen, S.A., a Swiss-based company that he helped found.

The new guidelines, which would supersede a looser policy adopted in 1966, also call for faculty members to report a range of activities that could pose potential conflicts, even though the activities are compatible with faculty responsibilities. For example, the guidelines cite "situations in which a member directs students into a research area from which a member hopes to realize financial gain." The policy also explicitly states for the first time that faculty members may not spend more than 20 percent of their time involved in outside activities, an unspoken and sometimes unenforced rule in the past.

While the Faculty Committee on Conflicts of Interest would not pursue cases on its own initiative, authors of the new policy said they believed the guidelines would compel some faculty members to give a fuller account of their activity. "The difference," said Professor Martin, "is that the policy holds individual faculty members responsible for reporting what they are doing." In the past, he said, "the standards have been vague" and some faculty members have not fully disclosed outside interests.

Other regulations already in place at Harvard deal specifically with faculty involvement in Government-financed programs and work involving United States intelligence agencies.